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Reflected glory



TIME TO REFLECT: CA members, journalists and security personnel mill about the entrance to the BICC



p4-5 The sisters would love to be doing it by themselves, if the Caucus of Women MPs were taken as seriously as they should be. And why, wonders MP Sunil B Pant, won't the big comrades pay attention to the small ones?



p10 Diesel from seeds? Jatropha could be the future fuel of Nepal once the first harvests come through.



p12 There's more to Jajarkot than what you see in the papers. Mountains, palaces, temples, bats. Go west!

p3 Prashant Jha anticipates the results of the third round of voting for PM on Monday



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IN A STATE OF DEPRIVATION

This may be the wrong time to discuss the latest findings of a new poverty survey, when the whole country is consumed by uncertainty as parliament tries for the third time to elect a new prime minister. Or this may be just the right time because it proves that it is political mismanagement that has turned Nepal into the poorest country in Asia.

To be sure, we have taken giant strides in the last 20 years in child and maternal survival, the distribution of safe drinking water, and promoting literacy. But imagine how much more progress we would have made if it hadn't been for that ruinous war, if there was a government that could ensure efficient delivery, if the development budget was actually spent, and if there was political stability.

Nepal ranks 82 among 104 countries in the latest Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) put together by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNDP's Human Development Report Office. The new index uses 10 indicators grouped under health, education, and living standards and tracks the level of deprivation from these services. It shows that 84.7 per cent of Nepalis are deprived, and more than 18 million people are 'poor'. It should be little comfort to us that India ranks 74 in the MPI: even war-torn Sri Lanka is way ahead at 32.

In fact, what little progress we've made since 1990 has been achieved despite government, mostly through individual and community-based initiatives. What is perhaps surprising, to put a positive spin on this shameful national ranking, is that with all the mismanagement and political disarray, Nepal did not

fare worse. If we want to feel still better, we can cite the National Planning Commission's figures which show 'only' 31 per cent of the people living below the poverty line, or



the World Bank's estimate that 55 per cent live on less than \$1.25 a day.

The reason is that 15 per cent of Nepal's population is working abroad at any given time, and they send home \$2 billion a year. This is improving family cash income, but it doesn't always correlate with access to services like years of schooling, safe drinking water, electricity, or chronic hunger in children. Many of these basic services are the prerogative of the state, and an unresponsive state keeps its people poor.

Every politician horsetrading for Monday's election should look at the MPI figures and hang his heads in shame. They can't pass the buck because many of them have been at the helm of the state since 1990. They should also be deeply worried by the statistics of mass deprivation because of what it means for the future of the political process in this country.

Go on, tear yourselves apart politically if you must to get into government. But work on a minimum national consensus on development. Set out an ambitious, visionary strategy to improve service delivery and increase purchasing power by job creation. Get real-time monitoring in place so progress can be evaluated and course corrections made.

Nepal's politics has made us a laughing stock. Our poverty is a national disgrace.

KaL

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

MEDIA POLITICS?

"Media is politics, but it works best with pretensions of impartiality." (Trial by media, CK Lal, #512)

It's not. Media has a responsibility to inform and offer insight. What you are doing here is worse than what others are doing, you are defending the Maoists, ignoring the judicial process, and perhaps most importantly, covering up for the fact that this Kham character is a member of the central committee of the country's largest political party, which is also likely to be ruling the country very shortly. This is all besides the fact that you are defending a criminal organisation.

Nevertheless, a whole lot more importantly, you are guilty of the same travesty that you are accusing others of. You go figure how.

Slarti

TRUMP CARDS

The analysis is incomplete (Strategic selfishness, Prashant Jha, #512) and even perhaps dishonest by not presenting the complete picture: the Indians kept the four cards up their sleeve—the overnight so-called Madhesi alliance. Keeping silence on this speaks volumes about the writer's 'angle'. I wonder how much money leaders made this time for this 'unity' as opposed to the time when the party was broken to elect MKN.

sashi

WORK IS NOT JOY

Child labour is an outcome of two issues, values and laws, and in Nepal's case neither are present in sufficient strength to prevent such abhorrent exploitation. Clearly there are people whose values, morals, ethics etc do not preclude using children for personal gain however you want to define that. Likewise there are insufficient laws to tackle the issue and to punish the guilty.

Compulsory and enforced education is one such law, non-existent in Nepal, which would virtually eradicate the problem. Whilst there are extreme cases such as the one highlighted in the article, what about the thousands of cases where children are removed from school to help in the home or fields at harvest time? This is a constant problem some of us face in schools in the Kathmandu valley. Depending on the season classrooms fluctuate between being overcrowded or empty!

Dr B



MALE MULES

We need a lady Premier to break the ice (Ass for prime minister, #512). Males have failed to form a government, and events have shown they will never come to a consensus. So we can have a lady, preferably from the legal profession and with democratic credentials, as our next PM.

Bhaicha

UNMIN RESPONSE

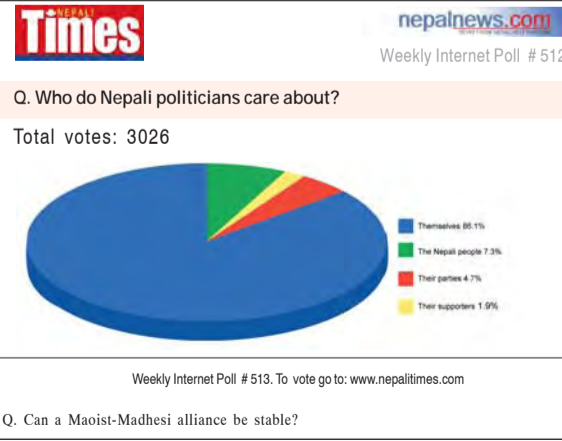
I would like to express my serious concern over the erroneous and misleading editorial published in *Himal Khabarpatrika* (17-31 July 2010), and reprinted in the *Nepali Times* (23 July 2010).

Among other issues, you claim that UNMIN showed indifference to the murder of Ram Hari Shrestha in Shaktikhor cantonment, and defended Maoist army personnel in Kapilbastu with perimeter security weapons. In both cases, the reality is the polar opposite. On the torture and killing of Ram Hari Shrestha, please see the UNMIN press release of 19 May 2008 and other repeated references, including in reports and statements to the Security Council, condemning this despicable act. As for your equally unfounded statement that UNMIN was "eager to defend the gun-toting combatants in Kapilbastu", please see the UNMIN press release of 25 August 2009, and my remarks to the press immediately condemning this as a violation of the Agreement on the Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies (AMMAA).

There are many other errors: on the non-paper, which was not "brought out" by UNMIN; on the Mission transgressing its mandate, which was firmly rebutted by a spokesperson of the United Nations Secretary-General; and on the tired claims of UNMIN being "pro-Maoist", which should not be dignified with a response.

Karin Landgren
Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal and Chief, UNMIN

The From the Nepali Press section of Nepali Times is a translation of selected material from the Nepali-language media and doesn't necessarily reflect the views of this paper. - Ed





PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

It's getting stale, mate

The third round is unlikely to knock a government into shape

After an explosive interview in *Kantipur* last Saturday, in the course of which he pointed to the futility of a majority government, even if it were led by his party chairman, Baburam Bhattarai headed to Kakani for a short retreat. He wanted to have little to do with the dirty parliamentary games that his party had first begun their rebellion against. Bhattarai picked up a book on the leadership qualities of Genghis Khan, and came back impressed at how an illiterate man had used military skills and political alliances to fill what was a 'historic necessity' to unite the warring tribes of Central Asia.

The historic necessity today, to repeat a cliché, is to write a constitution, which in turn requires movement on the cantonment issue. Neither of those processes can be divorced from government formation. The third round of voting will not serve any of these objectives.

The most probable scenario is that the stalemate will continue. Jhalanath Khanal will ensure the UML stays neutral for now. And the Madhesi parties will not support the NC without the UML on board, and even if they do, the numbers don't add up.

A Madhes-Maoist alliance is still unlikely. Upendra Yadav is tempted to go, but he has been locked into the broader front precisely to avoid this. Not all of his party members would agree either. The Maoists are trying to wean away a section of Bijay Gachchhadar's party, especially those who have not become ministers. Business associates and old royalist connections are being used to throw money around.

But even then, Pushpa Kamal Dahal will need to get at least 40-45 of the existing 82 Madhesi MPs to have a chance. That can happen if MJF backs Dahal and there is widespread cross-voting by Madhesi MPs lured in by the promise of financial rewards and lucrative ministries. It is also possible if Dahal strikes a deal with Delhi, which retains tremendous leverage over the TMDP and Sadbhavana, and over most MPs in the MJF(D) and MJF.

There are rumours that India may allow a short-lived Maoist-Madhes government and pull the plug in a few months. But Madhesi leaders and sources in Delhi and Kathmandu say that, barring a last-minute miracle, there is little chance of a deal with Dahal.

Let us assume that such a government is formed. How does it help? There will be a razor-thin majority; the NC and UML will remain out for now; and the bitter political and personal divisions will persist.

Even in the unlikely scenario that the UML joins such a government subsequently, can there be a deal on integration without the NC on board? Can there be a deal on constitutional issues between the UML and Madhesi parties?



KIRAN PANDAY

If the third round does not elect a government, some have suggested that the speaker write to the president and ask for advice. Others say that the process can be amended to allow fresh nominations through an all-party decision and the house business advisory committee.

But Dahal and Poudel will both

seek to block a change in the rules to give it another shot. This is where Bhattarai's efforts to generate pressure within the Maoists come in.

If Dahal loses again, it would dent his image considerably. Instead of recognising the objective situation, proposing Bhattarai's

name while retaining power from behind the scenes, and coming across as a statesman, Dahal will be seen as having jumped into the game through deft manipulation, but failing in the process.

Bhattarai will not have it easy either. The chairman will seek a 'clarification' for his statements. Dahal will once again pick on the 'nationalism' rhetoric and allude to Bhattarai's 'Indian support'.

Party members will ask Bhattarai where the guarantee is that he will indeed be able to muster the support to form a consensus government.

Dahal would prefer to sit out in the opposition, or join another government as a junior partner, rather than see Bhattarai's potential elevation as PM - especially after his own losses.

Bhattarai himself knows that this is not the ideal time to vie for

government leadership. Systemic constraints, and the wider pressures of a coalition, mean that the next PM will not be able to deliver. If Bhattarai does succeed, sections of his own party will seek to undermine him. But there is a real danger that the constitution may not be written, unless there is a broader political consensus, which Dahal has proved incapable of building.

Even as the transition becomes more complicated, there is a silver lining in recent developments. Madhav Nepal may have become PM through a parliamentary majority, but his legitimacy was always under question. The next government, whenever it is formed, will not suffer from the same conundrum. And there will be moral pressure on whichever party is in the opposition not to play spoiler.

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Women MPs seek to unlock

Women members of the CA blame male-dominated politics for stalemate

RUBEENA MAHATO

On 28 May, with negotiations for the extension of the CA stuck, women MPs approached the speaker's rostrum and started shouting slogans demanding an end to the political deadlock. That image, beamed



NHUCHHE MAN DANGOL



PICS: RUBEENA MAHATO

"Until women reach decision-making levels, they will not have any significant role in ending the current political stalemate."

- Suprabha Ghimire, NC

nationwide, showed that there was solidarity across party lines among the women members of the House. We don't know if the slogans had any bearing on the one-year extension. Probably not much. But two months later, the CA is deadlocked again, this time over the election of the prime minister.

"Why don't the leaders understand that the most important thing now is writing the constitution?" asks UML MP Shanti Pakhrin. "Anyone should be allowed to lead the government as long as the constitution is drafted in time."

Just as the men MPs did not join the women when they were sloganeering on 28 May, it seems to be mostly the women representatives who are outraged by the power struggle that has stalemated parliament's election



"There are leaders who haven't still changed their mindset. Some of them don't want the constitution to be written."

- Dama Sharma, UCPNM

of a new prime minister.

The majority system has failed to elect a prime minister twice and if the third round of elections on 2 August also breaks down, there is the danger of prolonged political paralysis. There seems little hope of a consensus government either.

"Maybe our male colleagues could learn a thing or two about inter-party cooperation from the Caucus of Women CA members," says Ushakala Rai, who coordinates the group. The Caucus has come up with a common position on gender in the draft constitution, new bills in parliament on domestic violence and inheritance, and a charter on women. "We hold different ideologies and are limited by the party whip, but we have come together when it comes to the national interest and



"If lawmakers are able to vote according to their conscience, the numbers game will not be so important and we can untie the political knots."

- Sapana Pradhan Malla, UML

An open letter to the

We young MPs must rise above the party line and remember that we, too, represent the people



GUEST COLUMN
Sunil B Pant

Dear BIG Comrades,

We, the young MPs of the country, have grave concerns about the continuing deadlock, as the parties have not been able to agree on a new prime minister, delaying constitution writing and the peace process. We have been meeting to discuss these crucial national issues for the last several months. Unfortunately, some of the big parties have suggested or even instructed their young MPs not to participate in such meetings.

We started meetings of young MPs in good faith for a number of reasons. First, we are concerned about how senior leaders control the Constituent Assembly and

parliamentary system so that nothing remains transparent or participatory. We, the young MPs, want to know about, participate and be heard in the constitution-making process, the peace process and parliamentary business. Second, the meetings of young MPs are not just for young MPs but for the whole Constituent Assembly and parliament. We believe we can bring the voice and mandate of young Nepalis to the Constituent Assembly and parliament. Third, we believe we can help narrow the differences between the big parties' big leaders. Fourth, it is our right to participate in the decision-making process in the Constituent Assembly and parliament. This right has been taken away

from us by the unfortunate and undemocratic practices of decision making in the Constituent Assembly and parliament. Fifth, we, the young MPs, will be working together in the future and this is the time for us to learn how to cooperate to build the nation.

Respected big leaders, the dialogue amongst young MPs is not against you nor is it against the people and country. I would like to ask you to be considerate and support the young MPs, to participate in such meetings, and please, to not issue party whips against attending such meetings. We would also like to call for your support to empower the younger generation, and to start having faith in us.

Today's young people, including the young MPs, are knowledgeable, understand the world and know what the country's needs are and what the people of Nepal want.

Thank you very much for your anticipated cooperation.

It is also high time for us, as young MPs, to be brave and rise above the party line and party whip. It has not been easy for us to find a meaningful role in the Constituent Assembly and parliament, partly because many of us don't think 'outside the box'. Many of us are habituated to look up to the big leaders for decisions. It is unfortunate that somebody has to remind us: "you represent the Nepali people". We continue to be mute spectators

deadlock

women’s rights,” Rai told *Nepali Times* this week.

Many women CA members are war widows, but do not let personal tragedies cloud their judgement. Pakhrin’s husband Buddhiman Tamang, a Dolakha UML leader, was brutally murdered by the Maoists in 2002.

Yet Pakhrin says: “I often come face to face with people who ordered the execution of my husband, but I am working with them because I want peace in the country and a new constitution written.” Maoist MP Devi Khadka, who is also from Dolakha and implicated in Buddhiman Tamang’s killing, is a member of the Caucus.

Constitutional issues are not restricted by the party whip, and

many CA members have risen above the party line. UML MPs, for instance, ignored the party directive about governance in the new constitution. The UML’s Shanti Devi Chamar registered a note of dissent against her own party on special rights for Dalits.

CA members have not just been lounging in the sun all these months, as the media has reported. The CA’s 11 committees submitted reports for review but male party leaders are divided over some provisions, which has delayed the constitution-writing process.

“There are leaders who haven’t still changed their mindset. Some of them don’t want the constitution to be written,” says Maoist CA member Dama Sharma, the first chair of the caucus. Sharma’s husband was killed during the war.

Ushakala Rai agrees: “The country is ruled by a few male Bahuns who are reluctant to share power. It is their greed that has held the country hostage. They cannot rescue the country from the stalemate.”

Despite there being 197 women MPs out of 601 in the CA, the assembly reflects the entrenched patriarchy of Nepali society. There are no women in any of the negotiation teams or on the conflict resolution committees. “Until women reach decision-making levels they will not have any significant role in ending the current political stalemate,” says NC lawmaker Suprabha Ghimire.

The UML’s Sapana Pradhan Malla says Nepali politics and the legal system have never been

gender-sensitive, and that is part of the reason why they fail. Malla and others say the constitution can be finished in time if they are unhindered by male power-centric politics. “If the whip is removed in parliamentary matters and lawmakers are able to vote according to their conscience, the numbers game will not be so important and we can untie the political knots,” she suggests.

Everyone is convinced consensus politics is the way ahead, but wonders why it has not been possible. “Why not,” asks Pakhrin. “I left my grief behind when my husband was killed to work with the Maoists. Why can’t the parties do the same?”



"I often see people who ordered the execution of my husband, but I am working with them because I want peace in the country and a new constitution written."

- Shanti Pakhrin, UML



"The country is ruled by a few male Bahuns reluctant to share power. It is their greed that has held the country hostage. They cannot rescue the country from the stalemate."

- Ushakala Rai, UML

Big Guys

when the big leaders decide on everything, including the fate of our country and our people, behind closed doors.

A whip is appointed to enforce party discipline, and secure the attendance of the members of a parliamentary party at any important session, especially when their votes are needed.

This is the universal understanding and practice of a whip, but Nepal is unique. We have not even raised concerns when the big extended the whip system up to Constituent Assembly matters by amending the Constituent Assembly operating regulations several months ago, without the knowledge of many MPs. Now, party whips are imposed on almost everything, including attending meetings, expressing one’s opinion, or meeting different caucuses in parliament.

I have heard that in the German Bundestag, there is no whip system, even for parliamentary matters.

How long can we afford to remain mute and quietly encourage these big leaders to continue

with such feudal exercises, where nothing is transparent and nothing is participatory? The country is paying the price, the people are paying the price, and all the MPs, including the big leaders, will pay the price once they have to go back to the people.

The country is in deep trouble but it’s not too late. The big leaders need to get their act together, as the Nepali people will forgive you your 100 mistakes if you do a single good thing now.

The young MPs need to organise and make efforts to get the country back into shape. Equally civil society, the media, NGOs, and civil servants need to support the peace and constitution-writing processes. A mutual forum between young MPs, civil society and the media would be a good starting point.

Don’t accept the situation as it is. Dream about what the situation could be – then help make it happen.

Sunil B Pant is a member of the Constituent Assembly and Parliament.

THIS WEEK

New monetary policy

Nepal Rastra Bank announced its monetary policy for the fiscal year 2010/11 on Wednesday. It targets 5.5 per cent growth, and bringing down inflation to 7 per cent from the current rate of 10.5 per cent.



The monetary policy has restricted the registration of new banks and tightened loan provisions for the land-plotting business by limiting the credit flow of banks to 10 per cent. Banks are being encouraged to expand their financial services to rural areas through incentives. It is hoped that mergers and acquisitions among financial institutions can be boosted by an incentives policy for those that acquire struggling financial institutions.

The monetary policy also aims to encourage banks to come up with a detailed plan to double their investment in agriculture, energy, small industries, and tourism within two years.

Iraq ban lifted

The government formally lifted the ban on Nepali migrant workers in Iraq on Wednesday to ease the difficulties of 30,000 Nepalis already in Iraq. They were facing the prospect of deportation after the US asked its contractors to prove that their staff were in Iraq legitimately.

“We took the decision for the sake of Nepalis already working in Iraq,” said Purna Chandra Bhattarai, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management. “However, workers will not be allowed to go there just yet without a further assessment of the situation of Nepalis in Iraq.”

The ban was introduced in 2004 after the brutal murder by Islamic extremists of 12 Nepalis in Iraq. However, the incident has not deterred Nepalis from taking up jobs in Iraq at relatively high wages. An estimated 2.7 million Nepalis work abroad.

PCL phased out

Thirteen agitating student unions and the Ministry of Education signed an eight-point agreement on Friday, ending a long-running row over phasing out Proficiency Certificate Level, meant for post-high school students under the Tribhuvan University (TU) curriculum. TU will not take admission for PCL level from this year on, though admission into technical subjects like engineering, medicine and forestry will continue.

Three major student unions affiliated to the Maoists, NC and UML as well as 10 other student unions affiliated to various political parties agreed to end their strike against the phase-out once the ministry agreed to make higher secondary education more accessible. The ministry has agreed to intensify the process to open community higher secondary schools teaching science along with other streams across the country.

काम सानो ठूलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै
रङ्ग र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान
लजाउनु पनि हुदैन । चोरेर, ढाटेर, छलेर,
लुटेर खान
पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ
ऊ त्यसैमा रमाउनुपर्छ गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र
समर्पित भएर गर्नुपर्छ ।
काम नै शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र मुक्ति हो ।
कामको इज्जत गरौं, पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

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ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

KOLKATA: Kathmandu and Kolkata have more in common than their first letter and this beed never tires of finding parallels between the two cities, both of which have been ruled by socialists.

The striking similarity is still how easily strikes can take place in both cities. Although Kathmandu managed to stay banda-free in June and July, Kolkata has already had its share of half a dozen strikes in that time. Residents of both cities have to factor in extra travel time for traffic jams before they leave their houses. Kolkata may not have graduated to the electronic horns our cabs and microbuses use, but the honking of the

Ambassador cabs can still boost your heartbeat. One wonders whether there are roads in between potholes or potholes in roads, whether in Kathmandu or Kolkata. The electronic taxi meters have more showpiece value in both cities, as the cab drivers state their prices. Stopping a taxi in Kolkata might get you nostalgic when, like in Kathmandu, the drivers tell you where they want to go, rather than ask you where you want to go.

Another similarity we see is how customer convenience takes a back seat in public spaces. For instance, airports around the world place restaurants in between check-in and immigration or security. But at Kolkata's international airport, one reaches the entrance of the restaurant before even checking in, just like in Kathmandu's domestic airport.

However, people in Kolkata,

unlike in Kathmandu, still value small money. While we have almost forgotten what one and two rupee coins actually look like, a single rupee still makes a difference in this Bengali city. If the taxi fare is Rs 22, that's what you'll pay. And here, you're doomed to be boxed inside ubiquitous Maruti taxis while in Kolkata, you can drive around in air-conditioned ones at a premium. Pricing strategies are very important in Kolkata as this is a city that recognises brands and demands value for its money. No wonder Kishore Biyani, the retail magnate, started with a low-priced Big Bazaar in Kolkata.

Kolkata is also positive about its development, as the real estate sector gains new momentum. ITC is not the only company to celebrate its centenary here; there are others who recognise the economic viability of the city. Culturally, the scene is changing as Bengali isn't just about Rabindranath Tagore. Television soaps are getting contemporary as is poetry. Today's poets don't just rail against the rich or romanticise, they are as likely to speak of the challenges of BPO workers and express the turmoil of live-in relationships.

A starting point for Kathmandu, if it is to learn from Kolkata, would be to start removing political graffiti from the streets. At least then people can start visualising a clean slate on which to plan for economic development rather than political rhetoric.

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Ncell has slashed its rates to Rs 1.99 per minute for calls made to any network. Existing subscribers need to type 'sajilo' and sms 302 to register for this plan, and new subscribers will automatically be included.

Innovative sharing



HP has introduced the HP MultiSeat 100 for schools, which allows a single host computer to be shared by upto 10 students. Students can use their personal monitors and keyboards connected via MultiSeat to the host computer, which consumes only 2.5 watts of power, reducing energy costs by up to 80 per cent.

Size matters



Syakar Company has launched its eighth generation Honda Accord, which extends 80 mm further than older models and is 25 mm wider. It has a 2.4 litre i-VTEC engine that delivers power of 180 ps. The model's fuel efficiency has been improved by 8 per cent.

New queen



The Hidden Treasure has selected 24 contestants for Dabur Special Miss Nepal 2010. They were selected from more than 100 applicants. The contestants will undergo a 5-week training course on grooming and confidence-building exercises for the final day.

Jazzy screens



LG has launched its Jazz series of LCD TVs, model no. 26LU11UR. The model is equipped with 300 W PMPO sound output, USB 2.0 connectivity, DivX compatibility and PC connectivity.

Juicy products



Alternate Herbal Products has repacked its Marmalade Bel Juice and also introduced aloe vera juice in its line of products. The bel juice is priced at Rs 125 and the new aloe vera juice costs Rs 435.

Birthday bash



Mobile Tron's Nokia store at the Tamrakar Complex has successfully completed a year of operations. To celebrate, Mobile Tron is giving away attractive gift hampers to its customers with every Nokia phone purchase.

Easy transfer



IME has signed an agreement with Kyodai Japan, a Japanese money transfer company, to facilitate money transfers for Nepalis working in Japan. The remittances sent can be collected from any of the 800 counters of IME in Nepal.

Religious accounts



Bank of Kathmandu has launched its 'BOK Pokhara Bachat Khata', a regional savings account for customers in Gandaki and Dhaulagiri zones, with a 7.5 per cent interest rate. The bank will donate Rs 100 per account opened to Bindhyabasini Dharmik Kshetra Bikash Samiti for the development of Bindhyabasini temple and its surrounds in Pokhara.

Cheers



Arctic International has launched Beck's Beer in Nepal, now available in all major restaurants and stores. Beck's is brewed by Beck's Brewery, located in the north German city of Bremen.



closeup

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YOUR VOTE MATTERS

When kings leave

"We haven't the time to take our time." - Eugene Ionesco



Eugene Ionesco was a heavyweight in the domain of the Absurd, and the theatre department at Rato Bangala School, under the directorship of Eelum Dixit, has taken on one of his most celebrated plays, *Exit the King*. This dramatic piece is a staple in the Theatre of the Absurd, a host of dark comedies and satires that challenges the very meaning of human life and mortality, and the play traces the slow but certain demise of a sovereign who has lived and ruled beyond his tenure.

Bérenger the First, a once-omnipotent monarch, faces a crisis of sorts when his court is reduced to two wives and a few loyal servants. Bérenger's denial of this decline is evident from the start, and his refusal to

succumb to death, both political and literal, reflects the degree of his self-centredness; as the story progresses, however, the character begins to acknowledge the inevitability of his demise. When engaging in absurd comedy one needs the foresight and moderation to ensure that parody and satire don't run into the realm of sheer buffoonery, and this was the challenge before the cast and crew at Rato Bangala. Mita Hosali, the Elder Queen in this production, spoke to *Nepali Times* about how this production by Nepal Shakes engaged with Ionesco's play.

What prompted you to take on *Exit the King*?

Eelum (the director) brought up *Exit the King* because he felt it conveyed a lot of meaning about

the meaninglessness of our lives. I read it and thought, wow, it has so many layers, and it provides opportunities for both dark and high comedy. Also, it contains characters who are irresponsible, self-absorbed and consumed by their own mortality, and the more we thought about it, we saw how relevant it was in representing not only local but also global political realities.

How did you engage with Ionesco's dramatic and comedic style?

Our challenge was to explore the inherent comedic moments by first developing an affinity for the quirks of individual characters; the more we delved into their idiosyncrasies, the easier it became to discover the comedy. We also needed to really feel the

moments themselves, and to understand the trajectories and motivations of each of the characters. For instance, while the older characters like the King and Elder Queen needed to be depicted as members of a vanishing species that possessed stature and breeding, the younger characters needed to be portrayed as lighter and more accessible.


What kinds of challenges did you face?

Absurd comedy is a very particular genre, and there's so much complexity in the characters and their situations. The challenge was finding equilibrium – we couldn't let the play become too dense because we wanted to maintain a degree of levity. It was helpful

to be working with a director who is a trained actor; Eelum really helped us discover moments of pathos and poignancy while never losing sight of the comedy embedded within.

How do you expect the play to be received?

You really never know, but we hope that the audience will forgive us for not going for the obvious in terms of choice. *Exit the King* is a wonderful, tight play – we've enjoyed every moment of it – and we hope the audience will as well.

Exit the King will open at the Kamal Mani Theatre at Rato Bangala School on Friday, 30 July. Call 5522113 for details. 

- Supriya Sharma



उज्यालो ९० नेटवर्कमा

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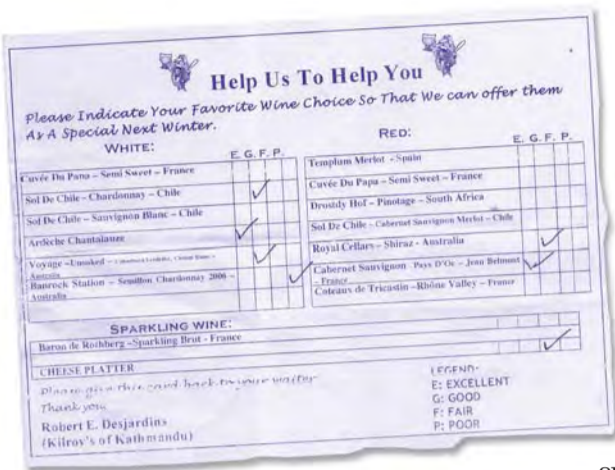
The thirsty gullet

Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel

The only thing I'd ever noted about Kilroy's of Kathmandu was the large, slightly ridiculous advertising board on the left as you enter Thamel, which features an impressively bewhiskered old man raising a toast while declaiming the 'SEXquisite' food. These days I don't even notice it, preoccupied as I am dodging the sarangi sellers, the glue-sniffing street kids, and the trannies. Such are the delights of Thamel these days.

But my eyes turned to the old man once more on my way to the 8th Monsoon Wine Festival at Kilroy's. I don't know what I expected, but I was surprised to turn left into Jyatha and into a rambling, dimly lit garden space above which considerable yet cozy restaurant space and an equally expansive patio beckoned. There wasn't much of a festival going on, in the sense of a carnival or mela. In fact, the place was practically empty. But a glance at the menu implied the festivities were all locked up right there, and perhaps the only crime Kilroy's had committed was being tucked away in a corner of Thamel so long everyone had forgotten it actually existed.

Inexplicable, given the very reasonably priced wine on offer during the rainy season. With a dozen wines at between



Rs 800-1000 a bottle and Rs 200-odd a glass, and the option of tasting any wine on the specials menu gratis, soon we were very festive indeed. Add to this a large continental, Nepali, Indian, Tandoori and salad menu, and I began to feel positively ashamed at having given up on Thamel.

The wine was a mixed bag, but deliberately so, ranging from semi-sweet Cuvée Du Papa (that the tasting notes recommend unabashedly to 'wine virgins') to the excellent Ardèche Chantalauze, a light, dry, slightly lemony white. Hardy's unoaked Voyage was a heavier, more rounded white than the Ardèche, and well suited to the assortment of salads we

ordered. The Banrock Station Semillon Chardonnay didn't meet with our group's favour, however, which variously described it as 'boring' and 'soapy' (something I'd also apply to the Danish blue in the cheese platter, probably not the best cheese in the world; the other cheese, too, struggled to put up a fight). The Sol De Chile Chardonnay was sprightly and lively, if a little on the light side. But there was something for everyone, even the member of our party who greeted one of the whites with, "Is that wine?"

By then we were hankering for something a little weightier. Enter an Oz Shiraz from Royal Cellars, a good, fruity start. Having quaffed the bottle, we moved on to a Jean Belmont Cabernet Sauvignon, a dry, solid red that had us wishing we'd asked for a steak or two. Alas, by this time we'd waved away the closing kitchen.

More substantial fare will have to wait till next time, and monsoon or no, I'll be back this season. Bravo! 🇳🇵

PS The man in the ad was actually there, whiskers, pipe and all.

Nepali Kukur

EVENTS

- Exit the King**, an absurdist play by Eugene Ionesco, directed by Eelum Dixit and presented by Nepal Shakes. *From Saturday 30 July to 8 August, Kamalmani Theatre, Patan Dhoka, Tickets start from Rs 400, student and group discounts available, call 5522113 or email nepalshakes@gmail.com*
- Gurukul**, CK Lal debuts as playwright for 'Sapana ko Sabiti', directed by Sunil Pokharel. *Till 31 July, Gurukul, Purano Baneswor*
- Varsha: women art exhibition 2067**, a celebration of women in the arts. *Till 7 August, Nepal Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), Naxal*
- Lazimpat Gallery Café**, screening of the movie *It's Complicated*, starring Meryl Streep. *Friday 30 July, 6.30pm, Lazimpat, call 4428549*
- Taqwacore**, THE BIRTH OF PUNK ISLAM
- House of Music**, screening of *Taqwacore*, the birth of Punk Islam. *Saturday 31 July, from 4 to 6.30pm, House of Music, Thamel*
- 8th Annual Wine Festival**, be there at Kilroy's for the best place for great value wine in Kathmandu (see review). *Kilroy's, Thamel, 4250440*

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Weekly Farmers' Market, a market like no other with organic and gourmet food, healthy breakfasts, fresh coffee and lots of socialising. *Saturday 10 July, 9am to 12pm, 1905, 4215068*

MUSIC

Paleti, veteran singer Phatteman to grace the Paleti stage with his mesmerising vocals. *Friday 30 July, contact 4412469, www.nepalaya.com*

Chevrolet Concert Series V, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory brings you the Blues combo, Teen combo, fusion instrumentals from guest band Aatma, and surprise act Euro Trash, all for free! *Saturday 31 July, Jhamsikhel, 5013554, www.milesmusicfestival.com*

DINING

Splash Bar & Grill, great weekend BBQ dinner, *Fridays and Saturdays, 6pm to 9pm, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, Rs 1200, 4411818*

Olive Garden, mediterranean food fest. *Everyday, 6pm onwards, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, 4411818*



New Orleans, offers a wide variety of western dishes that are scrumptious yet

healthy. We got hooked on the rosemary chicken and hamburgers. *Jhamel, 5522708.*

Ghangri Café, a quiet place with comfortable sofas and a lovely courtyard, perfect for those sunny afternoons. Although famous for their open sui mai, they offer a few other great dishes as well. *Pulchowk (near the Suzuki showroom), 11am-10pm except Tuesdays.*

Saturday @ Hyatt, take a refreshing dip in the pool, soak away your weekday sorrows and sample the delicious barbeque in the open air. *Every Saturday from 12.30pm to 4pm, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234*

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Café, enjoy wood-fired pizza and free wi-fi with an unparalleled view of Boudha stupa. *Every day from 9am to 9pm, Boudha, 2130681*



The Factory, a trendy restobar for a refreshing stopover in the chaos that is Thamel. Great food and drinks, with zesty music. Don't miss out on their cheesecake, it's a must. *Mandala Street, Thamel*



Comfort Zone, expansive restobar that needs to be full to come into its own. A decent range of cocktails and barbequed meats should keep you glued to the massive screen at one end. *Comfort Zone (rooftop of Bank of Kathmandu), Thamel*



Irish Pub, not only does it feel like one, but it's Irish all the way down to the original recipes from the owner's wife. Go green with their fish and chips. *Ananda Bhawan, Lazimpat, 4416027*

Vesper Café, has a quaint outdoor patio good for leisurely weekend brunches. Serves good salads and steak wraps. *Jhamel, open daily*

Attic, newly transformed lounge/bar ideal for Friday night drinking before hitting the dance spots. Popular among local celebrities and passing politicians. *Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat, 984161476*

Everest Steak House, an old-school joint for everything steak. A sanctuary for meat. *Thamel, near Chhetrapati chowk, 4260471*

Summit Hotel, posh Western-style dining area with candlelight and a romantic night view of the city. Get really busy with the succulent ribs basket, and add the finishing touch with a hot Dutch apple pie. *Jhamsikhel, 5521810*

Jazoo, a quiet place ideal for beer and relaxing conversations. Bring a friend and enjoy special barbeque set for a mix of everything, *Jawalakhel (near the zoo), 5538321*

Lhasa Bar, enjoy a beer or a splash of cocktail at this springboard for excellent young musicians starting out on the Thamel circuit. *Thamel, 985101043*

Buddha Bar has been around since the days of the hippies and offers a warm and cozy space for intimate conversations over a large selection of drinks. *Happy hour 4-7pm, Thamel, 9851053235*

Bronco Billy, a new restaurant in town offering Tex-Mex and Indian dishes. They make their own corn tortillas, which gets a big thumbs-up. But really, we can't wait to try their margaritas. *Pulchowk, opposite Namaste Supermarket*



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and 70 million jatropha saplings are now growing on 10,000 hectares of land. “Although the plants produce seeds from the first year on, we plan to let them grow for three years,” says Ramesh Kumar Rai of Crystal Bio Energy. “Seed production will then be high enough to produce diesel on a bigger scale.” The jatropha plants are now 18 months old, halfway to production.

A litre of pure diesel can be extracted from four kilos of jatropha seeds. After the first five years, the typical annual yield of a jatropha tree is 3.5 kg of seeds. Jatropha trees have a productive life of 30-40 years. The diesel produced from jatropha can be used for all types of diesel engines. In Nepal, jatropha fuel is expected to be used for irrigation pumps, stoves and lamps in homes. “The by-products of the oil extraction process are also useful,” adds Rai. “The glycerine produced can be used in soap production and the rest of the by-products can be used as organic fertilisers or made into briquettes for fuel.”

Besides Crystal Bio Energy, the Alternative Energy Promotion Center has been supporting 10 other organisations for jatropha farming. It has also helped set up biodiesel plants in Ramnagar (Chitwan) and Jhumsa (Palpa). “We are at the initial phase right now,” says Rai. “There is a need to develop commercial farming of jatropha and make it a sustainable fuel source.”

Farming diesel

Nepal may not have the fossil fuel deposits to meet demand for diesel but some dependency on imports could be eased if serious initiatives were taken to produce our own bio-fuel. Crystal Bio Energy Nepal’s jatropha farming is a step in this direction. Jatropha curcas, locally known as *sajiyon* or *ratanjot*, or simply jatropha, is a plant the oil extracts of which have a chemical structure similar to that of mineral diesel. Many feel it is the perfect biodiesel crop, as its seeds have upto 40 per cent oil content. It can be grown in poor soils and does not demand careful nursing once planted. Jatropha farming has proved to be

If we can’t mine it, we can grow it

an alternative fuel solution in India, Cambodia and parts of Africa. Japan and New Zealand have even conducted successful flight tests using jatropha fuel. Jatropha farming is being encouraged in Nepal as well. For the last three years, Crystal Bio Energy Nepal has been investing in jatropha. The company, in collaboration with local communities, has begun jatropha farming in 40 districts. It has been training farmers, too,



MILLION DOLLAR SHAKE: ADB chief Haruhiko Kuroda meets caretaker PM Madhav Kumar Nepal on Wednesday at Singha Darbar during his four-day visit to Nepal.



IN THE NET: Bhaktapur police arrested three for possession of tiger skins on Wednesday. The arrest took place a day before World Tiger Day was observed.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: Pedestrians cross the road at Bhotahitya on Tuesday, where the overhead bridge has been dismantled for repairs.

Myadhe joro aka typhoid fever



Typhoid fever is so common in Nepal that we have a colloquial name for it, *Myadhe joro*. Observant patients in the pre-antibiotic era discovered that the fever caused by typhoid usually lasts for about three weeks, that is, the illness came with a certain time frame (*myadh*). So if you could hold off not succumbing within that time, you’d made it. Typhoid, or enteric fever, annually affects some 27 million people in the world and causes at least 300,000 deaths. The bulk of the problem is in ‘hamro’ South Asia, that is India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. We have the dubious distinction of being the typhoid capitals of the world. Typhoid is basically a disease brought about by poor hygiene; it is caused by faecal oral transmission. Eating and drinking bacteria (*salmonella typhi* and *paratyphi*) through contaminated food is, unfortunately easy to do in Nepal. Intriguingly, typhoid fever is human specific. So our loyal friends the dogs are spared, thank heavens; otherwise they would all be dead of typhoid. Everyone, it seems, from Shah kings to Everest summiteers to Nepali prime ministers and Nepali villagers, have had a taste of this



illness. In fact it used to be so common that as a health professional, if all you knew was how to effectively treat typhoid fever, your practice would be a grand success, you’d be ‘mala mal’! Typhoid fever has even earned a little celebrity with the recent finding that some DNA extracted from the skeletal remains of victims of the Plague of Athens (450 BC) resembled *salmonella typhi*, suggesting it may even have been the cause of that notorious plague. Because drugs are easily available over the counter, drug resistance (especially to drugs such as ciprofloxacin) is a problem. Amazingly, older drugs like chloramphenicol are making an effective comeback for typhoid treatment. For prevention, it is important

to drink clean water, wash your hands with soap and water and eat hot, steaming, well-cooked food, especially during the summer months, when this disease peaks. What about vaccinations? Since most people who suffer from this illness are school-going children aged about 15, it would be ideal if our government provided this vaccination for free to this age group, as mandated by the WHO. Ironically, the only people using typhoid vaccines these days seem to be tourists. Author’s note: In Vedic mythology, Dhanvantari is the great physician of the gods. This author makes no claim to be following in his footsteps. He simply thought Dhanvantari would be a better name for this column than ‘Health Column’.



SPECIAL INVITE: A woman makes offerings at Sundari Chok in Patan on Monday, following a ritual to invite Malla king Siddhi Narsingh Malla to change his holy thread in the run-up to Janai Purnima

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WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Throughout this week, the Bay of Bengal arm of the monsoon has continuously streamed moisture, mainly in the eastern part of the Himalaya, in pulses. Fragmented portions of the stream contributed to showery rains across Nepal, mainly in the rain pocket zones. July is going to be the second consecutive rain deficit month of this monsoon in the Valley. Fresh satellite pictures show rain-bearing clouds advancing through separate channels towards eastern and western Nepal and rainfall in the days ahead may follow a similar rhythm. We can look forward to more rainy nights with cool mornings and pleasant days with sunny intervals over the weekend.

FRI	SAT	SUN
28-20	29-21	28-19

Video bites



KALAM
Rabi Thapa

Watching television has always been a slightly fraught experience in typically conservative, multi-generational households in Nepal. The embarrassing 'scenes' in Hollywood movies one can anticipate and avoid in the company of one's grandma or grandchild, but lascivious music videos in English, Hindi and Nepali are so common you either tolerate them or pick up a book. Smut exists, but it's an easy choice what you want to do about it when a flick of the switch can settle the matter either way.

Sleazy music videos are not so very new, and it's not my intention to rant against the titillation which as a teenager, might have thrilled. But a trawl through the Nepali channels of today hints at something more disturbing.

Anyone heard of NBEX Mountain TV? At first chance, most of the traditional fare on play seems conventional enough. There's a lot of melodic dohori-style call-and-response folk singing, as well as ghazal pop. We're so accustomed to these styles that often we hardly pay attention to lyrical content outside of the chorus, especially when a video is fronting the music. And from what I saw in the space of a couple of primetime hours, Nepali music videos are leaving very little to the imagination:

A couple singing by the banks of the Marsyangdi,



Is video killing the radio star, or is it actually showing us who we are?

lamenting that society will not let them spend the rest of their lives together. Their solution? *Eutai dori paso lagau...* Cue gruesome images of the couple hanging from a tree as the heartless villagers repent.

A woman is forced away from her love to marry a drunkard and a womaniser, who collides head-on with a truck, leaving her a stigmatised widow. She commits suicide by drinking poison.

A woman dances suggestively to entertain her patrons, and after innumerable wiggles and winks, spurns one to leave with another with the approval of a middle-aged madam type.

A chaste woman sings while another dances lewdly to advertise her wares to a group of drunk men, whose pockets she picks at the end.

A man laments losing his wife to another man, who is seen plying her with gold jewellery.

And the apex of NBEX – *Hosiyaar*, a Sholay-type campfire dance with armed dacoits and vamps boasting of their love of violence and wild living, punctuated with images of a terrified, very young schoolgirl they've kidnapped and have standing by, tears streaming down her face.

What does this alarming

parade of sleaze, violence and trauma indicate? Bad programming? Badly made videos? Bad ethics? Or do these terrible videos actually reflect the society we are living in now, a hotbed of extra-marital affairs, suicides, prostitution, violence and thievery?

Music has always reflected changing social contexts, and dohori, as an expression of Nepali youth, has a special role in this regard. Of course, dohori itself has upped and moved to the cities, where singers make a living singing in restaurants while aspiring to record an album. It's no surprise then that the perennial themes of love and loss have been augmented by

references to migration (from *By-road ko baato ma to Gau chodera jaadaichu Qatar*).

And urban living, if one interprets this to include lashings of unseemly behaviour. It's not just the blatant glorification of crime that songs like *Hosiyaar* advocate and their videos enlarge upon. These videos reflect in bad taste what's in the lyrics, while others interpret the lyrics as per their own bad taste. Whatever it is, these visual narratives are beamed out to primetime

audiences across Nepal.

Should we recognise that we should have some kind of ethical filtering – not censorship – to mediate the kinds of images that are broadcast to Nepali families and children? Or should we accept these music videos and the songs behind them to be a fair reflection of modern Nepali society, and acknowledge that this society has changed for the worse in many ways?

Either way, we should be concerned. Anna Stirr, ethnomusicologist and dohori singer, has said, "As Nepalis of all backgrounds focus on shaping the future of their nation, dohori will continue to play a part in the ongoing conversation among diverse voices of the New Nepal." If NBEX Mountain TV is what this conversation looks like, we had better start listening. 🇳🇵

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Welcome to Jajarkot

Pics by NHUCHHE MAN DANGOL
Text by PAAVAN MATHEMA

Jajarkot has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. But the Nepal Tourism Board and locals are gearing up to give this hilly district a new brand. With Nepal Tourism Year 2011 just around the corner, Jajarkot is hoping that its dramatic topography, cultural heritage and historic monuments will be able to attract tourists its way.

A view of the district from the top of Jajarkot Bajar reveals the mighty Bheri River that bounds the district

winding its way around the base of a hill. Once a part of the Baise Rajya, Jajarkot is one of the few places that has a palace from that era that compares to the Malla palaces in Kathmandu. There are also two other smaller palaces well worth a visit. With mountains soaring to 5412 metres above sea level, Jajarkot is also ideal for Himalayan vistas, including Mt. Sisne and Jaljala.

Jajarkot is dotted with temples but the one that gets the most attention is the Shiva temple, located in a cave three hours walk from Jajarkot bajar. A colony of bats awaits devotees in the 'bat cave'. Jajarkot also shares the rich mid-western heritage of deuda and tappa dances.

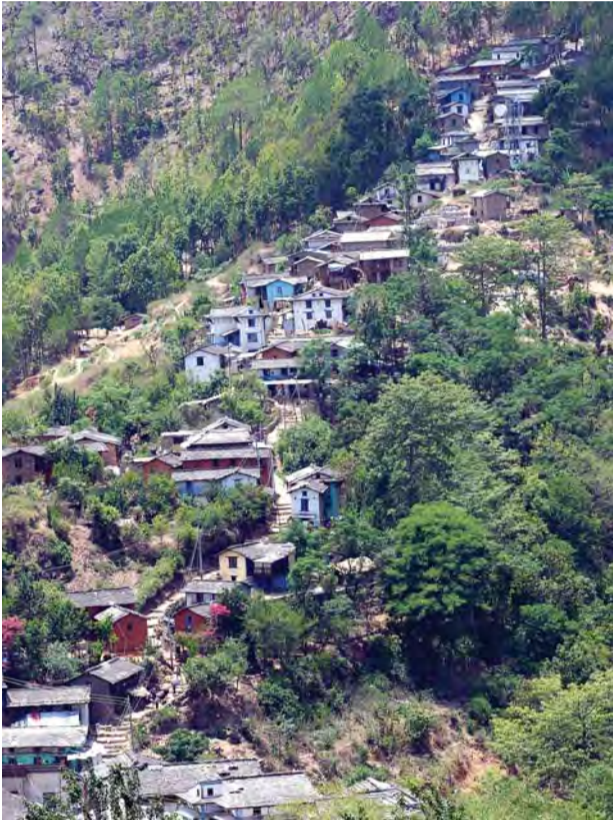
Facilities for room and board are a little rudimentary at present. But Suman Ghimire of the Nepal Tourism Board claims this could soon change. "We are developing new facilities for tourists and exploring the possibility of home stay," he says.

It's possible to get to Jajarkot by road but an easier option is to take a flight from Kathmandu to Nepalganj and then a flight to Chaurjhari. Jajarkot Bajar is about three hours trek from Chaurjhari.

Sher Bahadur Adhikari, a local, says: "Jajarkot has never been noticed as a tourist destination but we will do what it takes to change that."



The view from the Thulo Darbar at the top of Jajarkot Bajar onto the Bheri River, which forms the border of the district with Salyan.



The view from Jajarkot Bajar of Khalanga Bajar.



Hotel Baglung is the only half-decent accommodation in Jajarkot Bajar, but you might have better luck trying homestay elsewhere in town.



Women from around the area bring vegetables to market.



The Danfe Club entertains visitors at the Nepal Tourism Board's office in Jajarkot Bajar.



The Thulo Darbar of Jajarkot, dating from the era of the Baise Rajya, now used for administrative purposes.

DEWAN RAI

Kathmandu could be a whole lot cleaner if only we used a little ingenuity in solid waste management. Of the 500 tonnes of solid waste generated in the valley everyday, 66 per cent is biodegradable. That means 330 tonnes could be transformed into compost, with the remaining 170 tonnes easily managed by the municipality.

“The problem with solid waste management has more to do with a lack of awareness than inadequacy in systems of garbage collection and disposal,” says Deepesh Budhathoki. He should know. He has been manufacturing compost from the solid waste of Kalimati Fruits and Vegetables Market for the last two years.

Budhathoki collects about 25 tonnes of waste from the market every day, separates degradable from non-degradable waste, and transports the former to his factory in Chobhar for further processing. His company, Nepal Kalpabriksha Management and Trading, employs 14 people and produces one tonne of compost a day. He aims to increase production to 8 to 10 tonnes a day. From this month on, he will also be collecting waste from New Baneswor. The municipality has offered help in transporting household wastes to his factory.

Budhathoki has made a profitable enterprise out of garbage. People come to his

Waste not

Making compost out of waste is far more sustainable than dumping it in someone else's backyard



KIRAN PANDAY

factory to buy compost by the packet, mostly for gardening and vegetable farming. Compost is considered a better fertiliser because unlike chemical fertilisers, which lead to a gradual decline in soil quality, compost maintains the fertility


of the soil, prevents diseases and is not hazardous to health. Bio-controls inoculated into compost also reduce fungal disease and work as a nitrogen fixer.

But people still prefer chemical fertilisers to organic compost, according to

Budhathoki. One reason may be the subsidies offered by government on chemical fertilisers, another may be the attraction of an instant boost in yield, whatever the long-term damage to soil.

Ironically, the demand for

fertiliser – about one million tonnes – may play into the hands of entrepreneurs like Budhathoki. There was an acute shortage of fertiliser this year as government could only supply a hundred thousand tonnes. If there were mass production of compost, we could not only help meet farmers' demand, but also reduce dependency on chemical fertilisers and manage garbage in our cities. “The government should take the initiative to gradually reduce chemical fertiliser imports and end dependency, like the Philippines did,” says Budhathoki. The Philippines may not have been able to reduce imports, but 85 per cent of its fertiliser imports and over 90 per cent of its pesticide imports are organic.

Budhathoki also grows organic vegetables over 4 ropanis of land near his factory, where he explains the benefits of organic farming to interested visitors. He sells his organic produce at the same price as regular vegetables. “Since there is no market for organic produce in Kathmandu, we have to sell them at market price. People don't care much about the difference in organic and non-organic products,” he says. Such a pragmatic, action-oriented approach may be what is needed if we are to promote organic fertilisers and organic food, and deal with the organic waste in our cities. 

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Defiant Kham

Naya Patrika, 24 July **नयाँ पत्रिका**

You seem to find your way into controversies time and again.
Some may say it's a coincidence but I prefer to call it planned. A few politicians and the media have tried to picture me as a criminal since the Ram Hari Shrestha case. They have tried to tarnish my reputation and put hurdles before my political career. With the case of Ram Hari Shrestha, everyone tried to blame our party. It shows how eager reactionary forces are to spoil our party's name. In reality my character is exactly the opposite of how it's being portrayed.

When the police searched your room, they collected evidence that linked you to the robbing of Chinese traders.
Of the things that the police collected from my room, only the two laptops, two hard disks, Rs 500,000 cash, and a satellite phone belong to me. The rest, including the yarsagumba, is not mine.

What do you have to say

about the weapons and the papers that the police discovered?
They did not find weapons in my



room, they were planted and then the news was publicised. We don't have those kinds of weapons. The papers too were not found in my room.

The police are searching for you. Where are you? Are you hiding?
Yes, I am aware that the police are searching for me and it is right for them to do so from a legal point of view. But my complaint is that

some officers are using their uniforms to pursue a political aim. I am not running away from the police. I am where I'm supposed to be.

How long will you stay in hiding?
I will stay underground until those responsible for the Gaur, Dang and other massacres are brought under jurisdiction. That is because I am not a criminal or a murderer.

But weren't you blamed for the Ram Hari Shrestha murder case too?
I am not a criminal just because I was blamed for a crime. There is more to the

case. I have expressed condolences for his death and as the commander of the third division of the people's army, I took moral responsibility for the incident. But that does not make me a murderer.

People say that the Maoists are protecting you?
I am a Maoist, who else would protect me?

Iraq with conditions

Editorial in Kantipur, 29 July **कान्तिपुर**

The Nepal government finally woke up to the plight of Nepali workers in Iraq, after the American Central Command that controls foreign employment and security affairs in Iraq directed them to return home by 8 August. Nepal had imposed a ban on Iraq as a work destination, branding it unsafe, after 12 Nepalis were killed there in 2004. After the warning from the Command, the government lifted the ban.

The number of Nepalis evading legal provisions and using different entry points to go to Iraq is approaching 40,000. Nepalis persist in going despite the dismal security situation because it pays comparatively more than other countries in the Gulf.

The latest decision of the labour ministry only seems to affirm the 'illegal process' of the past. But lifting the ban on Iraq is not a solution in itself. Now, the government should clearly define the mechanism by which Nepali workers can legally go to Iraq. It should guarantee adequate security measures and facilities



KIRAN PANDAY

for its citizens while signing on new labour agreements.

The government also has to think about the implications of legalising the status of workers who had gone to work through illegal channels. For instance, there are about 35,000 domestic workers in Kuwait alone who went there when it was illegal to do so. If a similar situation arises there, what will Nepal do? More than half of the 3 million Nepali workers abroad are undocumented. What will Nepal do if something happens to these workers? The possibility should be considered before decisions are made.

It is no longer acceptable to send one's citizens for foreign employment through means legal or illegal and then ignore diplomatic relations and collaboration with those countries altogether. The government has to learn from this incident to prioritise its diplomatic duties and due process from now on.

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“We haven’t said we won’t support other parties”

Interview with KP Sharma Oli in *Nagarik*, 27 July

नागरिक

There seems to be coldness among party members since the nomination of the party chairman for PM was withdrawn, although he almost secured a two-thirds majority.

That is a misleading statement. That was not a proposal from Madhav Kumar Nepal or myself. Party chairman Jhalanath Khanal and General Secretary Ishwor Pokharel proposed it. We tried and when we couldn’t succeed we proceeded according to the party decision. So there is no place to blame anyone. The nomination was not withdrawn after we secured or almost secured a two-thirds majority, the withdrawal took place because such a situation was not possible. The Maoists pretended to support us but pulled out before the process started. What other parties said afterwards is public. The vote count is clear.

Did you say that if Khanal were to be a candidate, you had to be made a CA member and the acting chairman? I don’t have anything to say about such irresponsible and baseless claims.

Now will the party support the NC candidate? The central committee is sovereign and will make a decision. The committee has



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

repeatedly blocked a Maoist leadership government but has not talked of not supporting another party. The way the Maoists have closed all doors to anything but a government under their leadership for consensus has disturbed the possibility of national consensus.

What will happen if a Maoist government is formed with support from the Madhesi alliance? We won’t support or assist it. We won’t accept such a government.

The Maoists have transformed, maybe you haven’t seen it? Then why would they need their combatants? Or their arms? Shouldn’t they be ready for integration? If it is just about employing them, why do they want an army?

Proposal

Narahari Acharya in *Kantipur*, 26 July

कान्तिपुर

The second prime ministerial election was not decisive, and the third round on 2 August is also unlikely to bring about fundamental change. The parties need to come up with measures for crisis resolution. Two solutions are possible:

1. Government under Congress leadership
 - 1.1 Three ministers from the NC including the prime minister,
 - 1.2 Five ministers from the UCPN (Maoist) including a foreign affairs minister,
 - 1.3 Three ministers from the UML including a defence minister,
 - 1.4 Three ministers from the Madhesi alliance including a home minister,
 - 1.5 For the remaining positions, the prime minister would choose one minister each from the CA members of the fringe parties.
2. Government under Maoist leadership
 - 2.1 Four ministers from the UCPN (Maoist) including the prime minister,
 - 2.2 Three ministers from the NC including a defence minister,
 - 2.3 Three ministers from the UML including a home minister,
 - 2.4 Three ministers from the Madhesi alliance including a foreign affairs minister,
 - 2.5 For the remaining positions, the prime



KIRAN PANDAY

minister would choose one minister each from the CA members of the fringe parties.

There should be no more than 15 cabinet ministers, and state and deputy ministers should not be appointed. If a government is formed under the leadership of the Maoists, they should use the working plan for combatant management and integration proposed by the NC and the UML. If the government is formed under NC leadership, the working plan should be based on the Maoist proposal. The UML should also realise that it has no political grounds to lead government at present even if this is legally possible.

Since the NC has had a policy of prioritising the peace process rather than government formation right since the CA elections were held, the NC can accept either of these proposals.

Alt-Annapurna

Amrit Baskune in *Naya Patrika*, 25 July

नयाँ पत्रिका

Myagdi: Entrepreneurs in Mustang and Myagdi have started looking for alternative trekking routes, with the road link to Jomsom considerably shortening the duration of treks undertaken by tourists in the area.



KIRAN PANDAY

Since the completion of the Beni-Jomsom highway, the 21-day Annapurna Circuit has come down to 10 days (with the use of available transport). Shikh, Ghar and Narchyang of Myagdi and Kunjo, Lete, Kobang and other areas in Mustang are being developed as part of new trekking routes in response. Local communities have begun building infrastructure to develop Khopralek, Khayarbarahi lake and

Annapurna Base Camp as new tourist destinations, according to Tek Bahadur Pun, chairman of the Narchyang Tourism Development Committee said. The 80-kilometre stretch of the Annapurna Circuit is now serviced by a road, which has not only meant dwindling numbers of tourists but also threatened to overshadow the natural and cultural attractions of the region.

सार्वजनिक जानकारी

आदरणीय उपभोक्ता महानुभावहरू,

डाबर नेपाल प्रा. लि. को मूल लक्ष्य नै “हरेक परिवारको स्वास्थ्य र हित प्रति समर्पित” हुनु हो। यहि उद्देश्यबाट प्रेरित रहि कम्पनीले बिगत दुई दशक देखि स्वास्थ्यबर्द्धक, गुणस्तरीय सामानहरूको उत्पादन तथा बिक्रीमा समर्पित र क्रियाशिल रही निरन्तरता प्रदान गरेको छ। कम्पनी आफ्नो उत्पादनहरूको गुणस्तरको सम्बन्धमा अत्यन्त सजग र सम्वेदनशिल रहेको हुँदा स्वदेश तथा बिदेशका उपभोक्ताबर्गको स्नेह आर्जन गरि कम्पनीका उत्पादनहरू प्रति रुचि, बिश्वास र हार्दिकता प्राप्त गरेको छ।

कम्पनीको Real ब्राण्डका जुस उपभोक्ता माझ लोकप्रिय रहेको छ। कम्पनी र उपभोक्ता बिचको यो सुमधुर पारस्परिक सम्बन्धलाई बिच्छेद गर्ने प्रयत्न गरि दुराग्रही भाव राखि उपभोक्ताहरूलाई भ्रम, गुमराह र अन्यौलमा पार्न तथा Real ब्राण्डका जुस प्रति नकरात्मक सन्देश दिन बिगत केहि दिन अघिबाट सगरमाथा नामक टेलिभिजन च्यानलले भ्रमपुर्ण सामाग्रीको प्रशारण गरिरहेको हुँदा यो बिषयमा प्रष्ट पार्नु कम्पनीको कर्तव्य भएको हुँदा यो जानकारी प्रदान गरेका छौं।

खाद्य प्रबिधि तथा गुण नियन्त्रण बिभागको पत्राचार र उपभोक्ता प्रतिको दायित्वलाई आत्मसात गर्दै कम्पनीले उक्त भ्रमपुर्ण कार्यक्रमको प्रशारण पश्चात यथाशिघ्र बजारमा रहेको सम्पुर्ण Real Mango Nectar 200ml (ब्याच नं. NB 0007 I\3, Mfd 04\10) को मौज्जात खाद्य प्रबिधि तथा गुण नियन्त्रण बिभाग समक्ष बुझाएको थियो।

खाद्य प्रबिधि तथा गुण नियन्त्रण बिभागबाट कम्पनीको उत्पादनको नमुना परिक्षण गरि बिश्लेषण प्रतिवेदन तयार गरि Real Mango Nectar 200ml (ब्याच नं. NB 0007 I\3, Mfd 04\10) को यस कम्पनीको उत्पादन गुणस्तर अनुरूप सन्तोषजनक पाईएकोले उक्त उत्पादन बिक्री बितरणका लागि कम्पनीलाई फिर्ता दिने भनि मिति २०६७।३।३० मा पत्राचार भएको कुरा सगर्ब जानकारी गराउदछौं।

हाम्रो उत्पादनहरूको सम्बन्धमा कच्चा पदार्थ आयात देखि उत्पादन प्रकृया समाप्त भै प्याकिङ्ग सम्मको प्रकृयामा अत्याधुनिक प्रबिधि प्रयोग गरिन्छ। यस कम्पनीको सम्पूर्ण उत्पादनहरू बरिष्ठ वैज्ञानिकहरू द्वारा विस्तृत रूपले अध्ययन तथा अनुसंधान गरि गुणस्तरको सम्पूर्ण मापदण्ड अनुरूप प्रमाणित गर्ने गरिएकाले निश्चितरूपमा यसका उत्पादनहरूले गुणस्तरको सम्पूर्ण मापदण्डहरू पूरा गरि उत्कृष्टता हासिल गरेको छ।

उक्त टेलिभिजन च्यानलमा प्रशारित कार्यक्रमको भ्रममा नपर्नका लागि उपभोक्ताबर्ग समक्ष अनुरोध गर्दै गलत, असत्य र हचुवा सामाग्रीको प्रशारण तत्कालै बन्द नगरिएमा स्वदेश तथा बिदेशका उपभोक्ताबर्गको बिश्वासको जर्गना गर्न एवं कम्पनीको ख्यातिमा पर्न गएको असरको क्षतिपूर्ति सहित कानूनी उपचारको मार्ग अबलम्बन गर्न कम्पनी बाध्य हुने कुरा समेत जानकारी गराउदछौं।

आदरणीय उपभोक्तावर्ग,

उपभोक्ताको बिश्वास नै हाम्रो प्रेरणाको श्रोत भएकोले बिगत भैं सदा यो कम्पनी यहाँहरूको सेवामा समर्पित रहने छ। साथै कम्पनीको उत्पादन उपभोग गर्नका लागि कुनैपनि भ्रम, अन्यौल र दुबिधामा नपर्नका लागि हार्दिक अनुरोध गर्दछौं। आम उपभोक्ताको स्वास्थ्य, रुचि र बिश्वास सदैब कायम राख्ने पुनः एक पटक प्रतिबद्धता जाहेर गर्दछौं।

डाबर नेपाल प्रा. लि.



Straight from the Ass' mouth

Buddha Boy has the right idea, he should now come to Kathmandu and whack JNK, PKD and RCP to knock some sense into them. What is worrying a lot of people is the desperation that PKD is showing to be PM. He is ready to do anything, give anything to anyone to be prime minister again. Even within his own party comrades are concerned **The Great Helmsman** is willing to accept OMOP, induct Madhesi into the army and sell our rivers down the river.

✍

Awesome is even willing to wear a florid Hawaiian shirt to soften his image and is projecting a surprisingly mild persona to his interlocutors these days. Which is why the Maobaddies and Rajabaddies are behaving like long-lost lovers. The smooching between Comrade Lotus Flower and **Lotus Eater** the other day at the RPP Nepal secretariat had to be seen to be believed. Awesome appears to have got RPP's four votes in return for Lotus Eater getting Defence in the new coalishun. Just goes to prove there are no permanent enemies in politics, only chronic backstabbers.

✍

The now-famous Kantipur interview with BRB seems to have gone off like a **gagri bum** at the Pistachio Palace this week. Comrade Babu aimed a barb or two at his Bossman by criticising those who are "obsessed with the lust for power" and

went on to say that he was himself ready to take up the baton if his party instructed him to, and if that was what it took to end the deadlock. Chairman Awesome "got a rude shock", according to his aides, and saw red when he read the interview. (Surgeon General's Warning: Criticism within the Maoist party has been known to lead to serious health hazards, house arrest and ultimately, cardiac arrest). Sensing his Q&A had raised serious hackles, BRB made a hasty departure, wife and dotter in tow, out of mobile range in

Kakani. His loyal left-hand man, Comrade Partha, was left behind to handle the flak and impart some pretty pithy epithets about the Chairman. Seems Ram can say things Babu Ram can't say.

✍

The bad blood in the upper echelons of the Mau Mau seems to be percolating down to the rank and file. A turf war between rival Mao unions in a Balaju shoe factory shut down production of the shoe of choice of Baddies during the war. A dispute over the

division of the spoils between Maoist middlemen has closed down the biggest sand and boulder mining operation in Dhading. Even guerrillas in the mist harvesting yarsagumba in Dolpo are pitted against each other. What poppies are for the Taliban, caterpillars are for the Baddies. Inmates of the Surkhet cantonment are all AWOL this month because they had followed Com Marshal to pick yarsa in Dhorpatan where they ran into another **caterpillar hunter**, Com Bibidh aka Kali Budder Kham. The two were once partners in the trade in stolen cars from India, but have now fallen out big time. Lately, they have been ratting on each other to the cops. When two Chinese caterpillar buyers got robbed in Gongga Bu, police pretended to launch a nationwide dragnet for Kham. They should look for him in Dhorpatan.

✍

Senior Nepali bureaucrats are always in a fix when they get **multiple diplomatic invites** for receptions that clash. They have come up with an ingenious way to prioritise: go to the biggest donor first. So it happened on Monday that the "Joint" Secretaries went first to the ADB (\$500 million) and then to UKAid (circa \$150 million) and only then to the Egyptian Embassy (\$0).



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